

Guidelines for OVHA Coverage

Item: Extremity Traction

Definition: Traction devices use a traction force to separate two body parts and to put a stretch on the tissues connecting those two parts. The purpose is to correct a malalignment, reduce compressive forces on underlying nerve tissue, and/or stretch connective tissue. An extremity traction device applies traction to an extremity. It is typically used to align a fracture or realign a dislocation. Traction is sometimes used to lengthen a bone when significant bone loss has occurred, such as a traumatic fracture. Some types of traction use pins through the bone to which a traction force is applied; other types use a 'boot' or tape applied to the skin, to which a traction force is applied.

Guidelines: The purchase of this type of device for a beneficiary may be appropriate when the following conditions are met:

- The beneficiary has a medical condition requiring traction AND
- The beneficiary has used a traction unit under the supervision of a physician or physical therapist, and it has been determined to be beneficial based on objective, measurable parameters AND
- The use of the device is part of a comprehensive program that includes education in alignment, pin care and skin care, and self-management of the traction set-up AND
- The device is prescribed by a knowledgeable practitioner who is active with the Vermont Medicaid program.

Some practitioners use traction to stimulate height enhancement. There is a lack of medical evidence supporting this use of traction, and it is not covered by Vermont Medicaid.

Freestanding traction will not be covered if there is a way to use the bedframe and meet the beneficiary's medical needs.

Applicable Codes:

E0870 Traction frame, attached to footboard, extremity traction (e.g., Buck's).

E0900 Traction stand, freestanding, extremity traction (e.g., Buck's).

Cautions: Traction can cause or exacerbate pain if improperly set up, or if there is underlying pathology. Some individuals, particularly the deconditioned or those with arthritic fingers, have difficulty hanging the weighted bag that creates the traction counterbalance. A physician, nurse, or physical therapist should provide instruction in the use of the device, assess the set-up for proper alignment, and assess the effectiveness of the device using objective, measurable parameters. Caregivers should provide ongoing evaluation for tape allergy, dermatitis, thrombophlebitis, and vascular insufficiency.

Examples of Diagnosis: (For home use): Extremity fractures, traumatic bone loss.

Required Documentation:

- Current, complete Certificate of Medical Necessity AND

- Supporting documentation demonstrating that the beneficiary has a medical condition requiring traction AND the beneficiary has used a traction unit under the supervision of a physician or physical therapist, and it has been determined to be beneficial based on objective, measurable parameters AND the use of the device is part of a comprehensive program that includes education in alignment, pin care and skin care, and self-management of the traction set-up .

For traction units which are freestanding, there must also be supporting documentation demonstrating that:

- Standard extremity traction has not been effective for the beneficiary or is medically contraindicated, AND demonstrating through objective, measurable parameters that the freestanding or frame types have been successfully trialed.

References:

Skin and Skeleton Traction Management, Vanderbilt University Medical Center.
www.vumcpolicies.mc.vanderbilt.edu.

Hard Tissue: Injuries and Healing, Chapter 1. www.therapyedu.com.

Moore TM et al. Tibial plateau fractures: definition, demographics, treatment rationale, and long term results of closed traction management or operative reduction. J Orthop Trauma. 1987;1(2):97-119.

Ogunlade SO et al. Domiciliary treatment of femoral shaft fracture in children. W Afr J Med. 2003 Jan-Mar;22(1):67-71.

Signature of OVHA Director: _____

Signature of OVHA Medical Director: _____

Date:

Revision 1:

Revision 2:

Revision 3: